

Cure for a Joyless Life, Part 3 - Acts 26:19-32 – July 11th, 2010

- This is part three of a series titled; "Cure for a Joyless Life," as the Apostle Paul once again tells of his personal salvation experience.
- Paul's salvation was of supreme importance to him. The joy of his salvation from the Lord - had become his strength in the Lord.
- It's for this reason Paul delivers this joyful and powerful message as he tells Agrippa how he met Jesus Christ en route to Damascus.

- Perhaps it was for that same reason the Holy Spirit had Luke record the detail of what Paul said here in the text that we have before us.
- In other words, Paul can rise from the pages of scripture as an example to us of what a joyful and powerful Christian life even looks like.
- Maybe you're here today, and you are in a religious rut, or as one called it; "the Christian ghetto," and your life is joyless and powerless.
- The cure is woven into the fabric of Paul's testimony and is found in both the returning to - and restoring of - the joy of our salvation.

1. Seeing the Light (Verses 12-13)

- Here Paul tells Agrippa about that day on the road to Damascus he saw the light which would ultimately change the course of his life.
- When in that dark time in those seasons of life, we would do well to remember that first time we saw the light Who is our eternal life.

2. Ceasing the struggle (Verse 14)

- Paul then recalls what Jesus said to him about how hard it was for Paul to kick against the goads by persecuting Jesus Himself.
- If you're life has become hard in this joyless and powerless state you're in, remember how hard your life was before you were saved.

3. Witnessing for Jesus (Verses 15-16)

- Paul tells Agrippa that Jesus told him to get up and stand on his feet because He's been appointed as a witness of what he's seen.
- Question; do you remember how often you told people about Jesus when you were first saved? Do you remember the joy as well?

4. Receiving God's forgiveness (Verses 17-18)

- Paul tells how Jesus sent him to Jew and Gentile to open their eyes, turn from darkness to light, Satan to God and receive forgiveness.
- I don't think that the role forgiveness plays in a joyful and powerful Christian life can ever be understated. Here's why:
- Most people don't understand God's forgiveness, and thus they are kept and trapped by Satan's condemning power over them.
- I both see it - and say it this way; to be forgiven much is to love much which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that brings the joy of the Lord.

5. Facing mans opposition (Verses 19-24)

19 "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. 20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. 21 That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. 22 But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen- 23 that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles." 24 At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

- v19-20 Paul tells Agrippa that he obeyed the vision and preached repentance first in Damascus, then Jerusalem, and to the Gentiles.
- v21 He then explains that this was the reason the Jews seized him while he was in the temple courts in Jerusalem and tried to kill him.
- v22-23 Paul describes how God helped him to stand on that day testifying to all that Christ would be crucified, buried and resurrected.
- v24 Luke tells us that Festus interrupts Paul by shouting at him that he's out of his mind and that his great learning is driving him crazy.

6. Making people sweat (Verses 25-28)

25 "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. 26 The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." 28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"

- v25-26 Paul tells him he's not insane and what he's saying is true and reasonable and Agrippa knows this which is why Paul says this.
- v27 Paul then asks King Agrippa if he believes the prophets then quickly answers his own question by telling him he knows he does.
- v28 Agrippa, who is clearly on the hot seat asks Paul if he thinks he can persuade him to be a Christian in such a short period of time.

"I preach to my congregation week after week. And I pray that I may be able to preach with such convicting power that my people will sweat! I do not want them to leave my services feeling good. The last thing I want to do is to give them some kind of religious tranquilizer-and let them go to hell in their relaxation. The Christian church was designed to make sinners sweat. I have always believed that, and I still believe it. The messages preached in our churches should make backslidden Christians sweat. And if I achieve that objective when I preach, I thank God with all of my heart, no matter what people think of me."

A.W. Tozer "Jesus Is Victor!" pp. 61-62

7. Being pronounced innocent (Verses 29-32)

29 Paul replied, "Short time or long-I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." 30 The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. 31 They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment." 32 Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

- v29 Paul responds to Agrippa saying that whether it's a short time or long time he prays that he and all listening will be saved like him.
- v30-31 Agrippa, Bernice Festus and those with them leave the room telling each other Paul has done nothing deserving death or prison.
- v32 Agrippa then tells Festus that if Paul hadn't made an appeal to Caesar he could have actually been released from prison right then.